

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 9, and ending on page 1, line 17, as follows:

The present application hereby incorporates by reference in its entirety U.S. patent application Ser. No. [[_____]] 10/613,423, entitled "Distillation of a Fischer-Tropsch Derived Hydrocarbon Stream ~~Prior to Hydroprocessing~~," by Richard O. Moore, Jr., Donald L. Kuehne, and Richard E. Hoffer; U.S. patent application Ser. No. [[_____]] 10/613,058, entitled "Catalytic Filtering of a Fischer-Tropsch Derived Hydrocarbon Stream," by Jerome F. Mayer, Andrew Rainis, and Richard O. Moore, Jr.; and U.S. patent application Ser. No. [[_____]] 10/613,421, entitled "Ion Exchange Methods of Treating a Fischer-Tropsch Derived Hydrocarbon Stream," by Lucy M. Bull and Donald L. Kuehne.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 19, line 30, and ending on page 20, line 5, as follows:

While not wishing to be limited by any particular theory, the acid extraction process 18 appears to convert soluble metal contaminants into a particulate form and may agglomerate very small particulate contaminants into larger particulates, which may then be removed by filtering. This embodiment is illustrated in FIG. 2. Referring to FIG. 2, a natural gas 10 may be converted to a syngas 11, which is passed to a Fischer-Tropsch reactor 13, as before. In this embodiment, however, the effluent products 14 from the Fischer-Tropsch reactor 13 are first passed to an acid treatment [[28]] 18 before a secondary filtering step (in this case filtering step [[24]] 28) is carried out.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 6, and ending on page 20, line 11, as follows:

The filtering step [[22]] 15 may be termed a "primary" filtering step because this is the stage of the filtering that removes the majority of the Fischer-Tropsch catalyst fines from the Fischer Tropsch product stream 14. These particulates may be about 10 microns or larger in size in some situations, and 1 micron or larger in other situations. It should be noted that the filtering step [[22]] 15 may be performed either inside or outside of the reactor 13.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 12, and ending on page 20, line 16, as follows:

Referring again to FIG. 2, a secondary filtering step [[24]] 28 may be performed after the acid treatment [[28]] 18 to remove the soluble metal contaminants that had been converted into a particulate form by the acid treatment [[28]] 18. Selection of the type of filtering element in step [[24]] 28 is all that is required to reduce the metal contamination problem once the acid treatment step [[28]] 18 has been accomplished.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 17, and ending on page 20, line 21, as follows:

In a variation of this embodiment, at least a portion of the effluent 25 from the acid treatment process [[28]] 18 may be recycled to the primary filter [[22]] 15 such that the primary filter [[22]] 15 may remove precipitated contamination whose precipitation was instigated by the acid treatment [[28]] 18. Such a configuration may obviate the need for a secondary filter [[24]] 28.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 22, and ending on page 20, line 26, as follows:

In accordance with the embodiments of FIG. 2, the present inventors have used a 0.45 micron filter to remove aluminum contamination from a Fischer-Tropsch product stream rendered insoluble or filterable by an acid treatment [[28]] 18. The contamination was reduced to a level below the detectable limits as measured by ICP-AES (inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy).

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 27, and ending on page 21, line 3, as follows:

In an alternate embodiment (also depicted in FIG. 2), an additive 26 to the Fischer-Tropsch reactor 13 causes the precipitation and/or agglomeration of soluble contamination within the reactor 13. The additive 26 may be acidic in nature, and the contamination within the reactor whose precipitation is desired may have a metallic component. The precipitated contamination is then filtered out of the product stream by either the primary filter [[22]] 15 or the secondary filter [[24]] 28. Advantages of precipitating the soluble contamination using an additive 26 are that no additional significant equipment is required, since the apparatus for carrying out a filtration process is already present in the system.